

Washington Cotton Mill  
On Mill Creek  
Near State Highway 212  
Washington  
Washington County  
Utah

HABS No. U-1

HABS

UTAH

28 WASH

3.

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS NO. U-1

## WASHINGTON COTTON MILL

HABS  
UTAH

Location: On Mill Creek near State Highway 212  
Washington  
Washington County  
Utah  
Geographic Location Code: 43-2050-053  
Latitude: 37° 7' 44" N Longitude: 113° 30' 55" W

27. WASH

3.

Present Owner: William Adler  
2456 Prairie Avenue  
Miami Beach  
Florida 33140

Present Occupant: Closed

Present Use: Storage

Statement of Significance: This was the largest factory west of the Mississippi when built, significant during the period of colonization of the southwestern part of the state.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

## A. Physical History:

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

U.S. patent to Adolphus R. Whitehead, (September 16, 1875).  
Adolphus R. Whitehead to Hans Hansen or Z.C.R. Virgen  
Mfg. Company (December 27, 1875).  
Zions Cooperative Rio Virgen Mfg. Company to Edward H. Snow  
(January 8, 1913).  
Edward H. Snow and wife to Washington Cotton and Bolting  
Mfg. Company (March 27, 1915).  
Washington Cotton and Bolting Mfg. Company to Edward Nelson  
and Edward H. Snow, (October 31, 1918).  
Rulon A. and Marion M. Snow, Laura S. Woodbury and Lena  
Nelson to Norman W. Walker (February 14, 1949).  
Norman W. and Helen Walker to Leon Hegwood and William  
Adler, (January 3, 1956).

## 2. Date of erection: 1866-1867

## 3. Architect: Unknown

4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: Supervisor of construction:  
Appleton Harmon, inventor of the odometer.  
Stonemasons: Elijah and Elisha Averett, Charles L. Walker,  
Timber work: John P. Chidester.  
Hauling: Hyrum Walker and August Madkelprang.

5. Notes on original plan and construction of building:  
The original building was one story in height, constructed of red sandstone and timber. A second story and attic were added to the structure in the fall of 1870.

B. Historical Events and Persons Associated with the Building:

After the establishment of the Cotton Mission in Southern Utah's "Dixie" country by Brigham Young, a move necessitated by the curtailment of the cotton supply from the Southern States during the Civil War, the need arose for local processing mills. In 1864, Brigham Young purchased the water privileges of Mill Creek from John M. Chidester, and began to explore possible sites for a cotton factory. He chose Washington because of its central location to the settlements, proximity to the cotton fields, and excellent water resources. Work commenced on the factory in 1866, and the first story was dedicated on July 24, 1866. It was probably not completed until December of 1866 or January of 1867. The machinery was installed about this time, having been brought from Salt Lake City by George Crosby and Orson Foster. James Davidson, a church convert from Scotland, supervised the installation and instructed the workers in the operation of the machinery.

The factory was in operation early in 1867, and at this time Brigham Young sent down Mr. Adolphus Whitehead and his family from Salt Lake City to become secretary (and eventually manager) of the company. Success was immediate, and in the fall of 1870 two more stories were added. Joseph Birch, who was manager at this time, left for the east on July 12, 1870 to purchase new machinery, which arrived in November of that year. In 1869, Brigham Young had offered to turn over his ownership of the factory to a locally organized cooperative. Shares were sold through the settlements, and in 1871 the Zions Cooperative Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company (instead of the Rio Virgen Manufacturing Company) was organized, with Erastus Snow and James G. Bleak as President and Secretary. With the end of the Civil War and increased competition from the Southern States, aggravated by the high cost of production and irrigation, the local settlers turned to more lucrative crops and in some cases mining. The economy of the factory faltered, in spite of the exhortations of church leaders, and it barely survived the Panic of 1873. In 1875, Thomas J. Jones assumed the management from Adolphus R. Whitehead

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until 1881, when Whitehead again took over. With the growth of surrounding settlements and mining towns, production again increased and was sustained through the 1890's. In 1893, Thomas Judd leased the factory and conducted it through its most profitable period until his lease expired in October, 1898. Competition of goods from the states was too great for the local effort, and Judd decided not to renew his lease. The factory closed, and did not reopen except for brief periods when parts of the building operated. Its last major period of operation was in 1904, when Armand Hof leased it. In 1961, Andrew Karl Larson reported that part of the building was being used as a foundry by the Norwalk Company. He also states that "the lean-to on the east side and the structure on the south end which housed the water wheel and power shaft have long since been torn away."

## C. Sources of Information:

## 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Washington County Abstracts of Title, Washington City.

## 2. Bibliography:

Hofen, A.K. Beneath Vermillion Cliffs, Published privately, St. George, Utah, 1967.

Larson, Andrew Karl. I Was Called to Dixie, Deseret News Press, 1961.

Larson, Andrew Karl. The Red Hills of November, Deseret News Press, 1957.

Larson, Gustave O. Prelude to the Kingdom, Marshall Jones Company, Francetown, N.H., 1947

Miller, Albert E. The Immortal Pioneers, Published privately, 1946.

Mortenson, A.R. Utah's Dixie, The Cotton Mission, Utah State Historical Society Quarterly, Volume XXIX, Number 3, July 1961.

Prepared by John L. Giusti, AIA  
July 26, 1968

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural interest: Pioneer industrial building of unusual size for its remote location and early date.
2. Condition of fabric: Masonry and heavy timber intact. Slight fire damage at Southwest interior. Most glass broken; plaster in bad shape.

B. Detailed Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: Three
2. Number of bays: 3 x 8
3. Over-all dimensions: 62'9" x 103'9"
4. Layout-shape: Rectangular with small wing at corner.
5. Foundations: Red sandstone
6. Wall construction, finish and color: Red sandstone coursed rubble.
7. Chimneys: No masonry chimneys remain.
8. Openings: Original openings have heavy timber lintels; wood frames and sills. No original sash or doors remain.  
Modern steel casements have been installed.
9. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable - wood shingles now covered with composition roll roofing;
  - b. Cornice, eaves: Very plain, almost no overhang. This ridge beam projects at each end so that loads could be delivered at loft doors by means of pulley hoists. A small projection of the roof shelters the beam.

C. Detailed Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Each floor is a single open space, except the first floor is broken by two rows of columns; the

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north bay is separated by a heavy stone wall and small rooms are attached at northwest and southeast corners. That at the southeast is frame and recent. That at the northwest is stone and appears in old photos. Second floor is completely open. Attic level interrupted by heavy timber roof supports.

2. Stairways: Location of original stairs not apparent.
3. Flooring: Modern concrete at first floor. Upper floors broad planks. Location of beams and breaks in planks indicate possible positioning of floor openings for stairs and machinery.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered walls first and second floors. Exposed construction at ceilings originally. First floor ceiling now concealed by celotex.
5. Doorways and doors: Only the openings remain in interior stone partitions.
6. Heating: Modern oil-fired furnace in northwest room.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation: Runs north-south with a cliff at west side and creek at east. Road and bridge to the north lead into town of Washington.
2. Landscaping and walks, enclosures: Area abandoned to weeds. Millrace partly obliterated.

Prepared by Paul Goeldner, AIA  
Supervisory Architect  
Utah Project 1968  
July 16, 1968.